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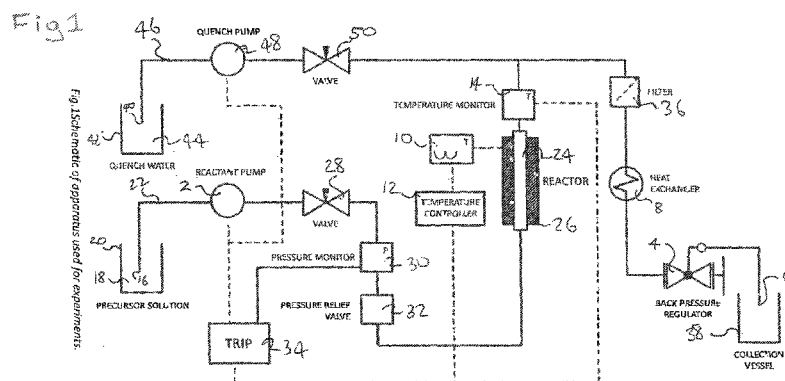
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(54) Title: A PROCESS FOR THE PRODUCTION OF METHACRYLIC ACID AND ITS DERIVATIVES AND POLYMERS PRODUCED THEREFROM



(57) Abstract: A process for the production of methacrylic acid is described. The process comprises the base catalysed decarboxylation of at least one or a mixture of dicarboxylic acids selected from itaconic, citraconic or mesaconic acid. The decarboxylation is carried out in the range greater than 240 and up to 275°C to provide high selectivity. The methacrylic acid product may be esterified to produce an ester. A method of preparing polymers or copolymers of methacrylic acid or methacrylic acid esters using the process is also described. Optionally, the process may be preceded with a decarboxylation and, if necessary, a dehydration step on a source of pre-acid such as citric acid or isocitric acid.